

EDITORIALS

What Do You Think?

What is the place of grades in an elementary school? A committee of citizens and educators now is studying the possibility of restoring the A-B-C system of grading to seventh and eighth grades in order to prepare them for high school. There has been some agitation among parents for this move.

One of the members of this committee is HERALD staff writer Tom Rische.

At the present time, children from kindergarten through the eighth grade in Torrance schools receive no graded report cards. Instead, parents receive written reports on their child's strengths and weaknesses, and in addition, a conference is held, in which parent and teacher discuss possible factors which might affect Junior's schoolwork. These include such things as handicaps, a broken home, poor home environment, and miscellaneous other factors.

At the Torrance Educational Advisory Committee meeting Monday, figures were presented which indicate that more children from broken homes fail to reach the levels of their indicated ability than do children from "happy" homes.

In high schools in Torrance, children do receive grades, mainly to satisfy college requirements.

The committee has been asked to study this set-up to determine whether the transition from the non-graded to the graded reports should be made while the child is still in elementary school, rather than at the time he enters high school.

Rische has entered upon the committee work with no particular "torch to carry" for either system.

Facts and figures were presented to the committee, indicating that:

1. Children learn at different rates of speed. If a standard lesson is taught, some will be ahead and some behind.
2. The different parts of a child's physical and emotional system mature at different rates.
3. Physically, girls mature faster than boys.
4. A child who retains 80 per cent of what he learns for a test, will, on the average, retain only about 40 per cent of the facts after 10 days and less than 20 per cent after 10 weeks, if he doesn't use the material every day.
5. Praise is the best method to get a child to work hard. Reproving him will make him work harder for a while, but eventually he will not do as well. However, children whose efforts are completely ignored will do poorer work than either of the other two groups.
6. The student who thinks he will be helped personally will work harder at learning than if he thinks it will help only the group as a whole.
7. Each child has a different level of ability and cannot achieve beyond it, no matter how he is prodded.
8. The most honest children are generally the most intelligent, most advanced in school, least suggestible, and come from homes where honesty is stressed.
9. A child who does poor or average work in his early schooling may "snap out of it" and do quite well in high school or college.
10. Grades are often a reflection of the teacher's opinion or of her mood at the moment. Different teachers use different methods of grading and different standards for the work. Hence, it would be possible for a student to get an "A" from one teacher and a "C" from another.

The committee was presented with a special study which presented the following conclusions:

"It is believed today that each child should have opportunity to succeed. A child should not grow with an attitude of competition therefore forcing himself beyond his ability in many cases. When a child is forced and pushed by pressure, his chance for success is decreased greatly. The profession one chooses is not a guarantee for happiness; one must enjoy what he does and do it with all his being. Schools of today try to develop individuals and not to make all children conform to the same pattern. The fear of failure should not be used as a means of getting more work out of an individual. Children work when they are interested; therefore it is the job of the school and parents to keep them interested."

"It is reasonably safe to say teachers' grades are not reliable nor are single evaluations. The student places himself in interest groups, if the proper attitudes are developed. The student will eventually find his own way without pressure, threats, and punishment."

These factors are all true, but, at the same time, they raise certain questions in the mind of many observers.

1. How true is the remark made by one local parent, "The parents of the dumb kids don't want grades; the parents of the smart kids like grades?"
2. The non-grade program is, at least in part, designed to encourage the slower students. Does it also fail to encourage the faster students as much as it might? Are we more worried about developing little Johnny, whose ability will never make him anything more than a laborer, than about little Billy who is potentially an atomic scientist? If we are, should we be?
3. Because of the absence of graded competition in elementary school, does high school furnish enough preparation for the competition in college and in everyday life, where competition is a byword?
4. Is this "happiness complex," making everybody feel good because he does not receive grades, really challenge him to his utmost in the long run? In terms of school work, what effect does the transition from gradeless to graded report cards have on the average student?

These are some questions which occurred to the HERALD and have occurred to others with whom it has been discussed. They are not a condemnation of the present system, but merely ideas which seem to be an important part of the program.

How do parents in Torrance feel about grades for seventh and eighth graders? A school survey indicated general satisfaction with the reporting system in the lower grades.

The HERALD invites readers to comment on the situation. We would welcome readers' views on the grading system in the schools, either pro or con. A just decision cannot be made without considerable evidence on both sides.

Readers might consider these questions:

1. How have grades or the lack of them affected your child? Why do you think so?
2. Do you think his getting a grade in the seventh or eighth grade, or in earlier grades, would be helpful to him? Why?

Any comments should be addressed to Editor, Torrance HERALD, 1619 Gramercy Ave., Torrance Calif.

It's your child and you who are paying for his education through your taxes. Now you can have your say about his education.

What? A Pistol-Packing Bobby?



YOUR PROBLEMS by Ann Landers

Many Women Claim 'Burt'

Dear Ann Landers: I almost "flipped my wig" to borrow your phrase when I picked up the paper and read the letter in your column signed "Burt." The guy who wrote it is my husband. His real name is Harold.

I never dreamed he'd have the colossal nerve to write to you and complain about me going through his pockets at night. Especially since the reason I do this is because he's so stingy it's a crying shame.

If I didn't pick up a little change this way I wouldn't have a penny to put in the fuse box in case of emergency. Thanks for letting me have my say, Ann. I feel much better now.—Marge.

Dear Marge: And I'd feel much better if you'd stop putting pennies in the fuse box... "in case of emergency." In fact, this is a good way to create an emergency. A blown fuse lets you know the circuit is overloaded, and prevents a fire. Brain up, Girl!

Dear Ann Landers: I'm "Burt's" wife—the man who wrote and complained because his wife ransacked his pockets at night. Since the heel saw fit to put this embarrassing situation before millions of readers, I feel that I'm entitled to an audience, too.

"Burt" has turned into a regular funnel since I married him 12 years ago. (He was a "social drinker" then, if you will pardon the expression.) I learned long ago the only way to keep him dry was to keep him broke.

So I go through his pockets every night and give him just enough money for carefare in the morning. I have to check regularly because he sometimes borrows a buck at work and gets lucky in a crap game. If you can think of a better way, that has a little more dignity, let me know.—Betty.

Dear Betty: You know your funnel—I mean your husband, better than I do. If your system works, it's good.

Dear Ann: Sure I clean out my husband's pockets at night. How else do you suggest I get back part of the money he takes out of my purse when I'm not looking?

This has been going on for eight years, during which time he quit a total of 21 jobs, by actual count. If I did not go to work every day, sick or well, we'd be on relief.—Detty.

P.S.: His name isn't Burt. I wonder where he dug THAT one up!

Dear Ann: For crying in the suds will you please get me off the spot? My wife kept me up half the night yelling. She insists I wrote that letter about the woman who went through her old man's pockets at night. So

help me, Hannah, I am NOT the guy.

My name is BERT not BURT, but she says the typesetter at the newspaper must have made a mistake. Maybe you help a lot of people with their problems, Ann, but you sure got me in a mess of trouble. How about a little assistance, please?—Bert.

Dear Bert: Tell your wife if the shoe fits to wear it. How come she's got YOU on the defensive, Buster? I can't prove you DIDN'T write the letter, since I never divulge the identity of those who write to me, but she can't prove you DID.

There doesn't seem to be much doubt about one thing, however. Your little woman has been engaging in nocturnal scavenger hunts. And judging from my mail, this is a mighty popular national pastime.

Dear Ann: I have a question that may sound stupid, but I haven't found anyone who really knows the answer. Maybe you can help me.

GLAZED BITS by Barney Glazer

Barney Plans New TV Series

Thought you'd like to know that I'm preparing a new medical series for television to be known as "Doctormentaries."

Al Harrison relates how his boss, W. Horace Carter, had created quite a stir by making an address to the grand jury in Conway, North Carolina. A curiosity seeker pushed his way through the crowd, rasped: "Where's this Carter?" and when he saw him, said dejectedly: "Ah shucks, he's only got one head."

Bob Vincent asks if we don't love getting a "Wish You Were Here" card mailed from Las Vegas by a fellow who owes you money.

Tip to married men: there's a way to get the last word—just tell your wife: "Yes, dear."

I'm sure that will keep her quiet, because what can she say after that? However, if it doesn't work, try saying: "No, dear," and that will be the last word you'll be able to get in.

When a point of argument is raised, most columnists will present both sides of the question and ask: "Anybody know the answer?" Not Art Ryon. He asks, "Any one care?"

My mother and dad were happily married for many years. Dad passed away several months ago. Their wedding anniversary was always a joyous occasion and I wonder if I should send Mother flowers on that day, or perhaps a little gift? What is your advice?—Daughter in Doubt.

The best gift you can present your mother on that date is to spend the day with her and perhaps invite a few of her close friends. Don't buy a gift or send flowers. It does not make sense to "celebrate" the anniversary of a marriage that has been terminated by death.

Confidentially: "NELLY BLY": This fellow is interested only in leading you down the garden path, and there's nothing "sophisticated" about this approach. Tell him to get lost.

(Ann Landers will be happy to help you with your problems. Send them to her in care of the HERALD and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.) (C) 1957, Field Enterprises, Inc.

AFTER HOURS by John Morley

How to Cut Taxes at Home

(Editor's Note: In two parts... The first part in this issue will deal with the problem of why taxes are high... and the second part in the next issue of "After Hours" will deal with a plan for reducing taxes by billions without sacrificing defense and other essential programs.)

Taxes can be reduced by at least \$25 billion without endangering American security, without jeopardizing our military defense program, and without eliminating the necessary services of government in its responsibility to the people. Taxes cannot be reduced... and will most certainly keep increasing... so long as politicians continue to "butter-up" their constituents at home by complying with their ridiculous demands for a thousand things they used to do for themselves.

Selfish and thoughtless millions have been taught by equally selfish and thoughtless politicians to expect more and more from government with no end in sight. It seems apparent that any office holder who advocated reducing the frills and service of government would have a hard time getting re-elected. But unless public servants take that gamble with their political future and tell the people the facts of life, they will be guilty of leading the nation on the inevitable road to bankruptcy.

About this time each year millions of taxpayers will have to go into debt to pay their taxes. Each of the past 25 years has reduced the net take-home pay of our people through taxes and through inflation. One of the reasons for this destructive inflation is government spending and the increased billions in government spending have been collected by higher and higher taxes from the same taxpayers.

We the people... with the aid of many irresponsible bureaucrats... have opened the flood-gates leading into an economic crisis and no one seems to know how to stop it. This is what makes our present government financial position so dangerous. Neither Republican nor Democrats have the courage to face up to it, for both are committed to more and more spending, with inevitable higher taxes, to pay for the greatest conglomeration of "frills, services, pork barrels, paternalism, politics, bureaucracies" the country has ever seen.

Most politicians are ignoring the facts of life... the lessons of history... the inevitable bankruptcy of any government on such a rampage of spending as we have experienced in the past 39 years. Irresponsible politicians are spreading "soothing oil" with assurances that "our increased national product... our increased business volume... our industrial wealth" will continue to pay such back-breaking taxes, which have already mortgaged the lives of our great-grandchildren to the year 2000. Already overburdened with a \$271 billion debt... costing us in interest alone the incredible sum of \$7 billion a year... we are called upon to put another \$71.8 billion for this fiscal year, the largest peace-time budget in U.S. history.

In recent years, under both Democrat and Republican administrations, and basically for the same reasons, heavy pro-

THE FREELANCER by Tom Rische

In 'Smoke' Valley

Cigaretts and smog both cause cancer, our newspapers informed us last week.

That means that a resident of Los Angeles County who smokes is facing a double-barreled threat. Of course, people who live in almost smog-free Torrance are better off than their compatriots who live in the often invisible, smog-ridden downtown section of Los Angeles.

A poll of doctors in Los Angeles County indicated that 95 per cent believe that smoke can cause cancer and that 41 per cent had recommended to some patients that they leave the area because of the smog.

Meanwhile, Torrance residents can sit at home and watch the brown smog clouds gather over Los Angeles.

A recent article pointed that the person who had the best chance to lead the longest life lived in a small town in Nebraska. That is, the residents of a village in that mid-

western state had a statistical edge as far as longevity goes. To date, there have been no reports of a general exodus to small towns in Nebraska, however, and such an event isn't likely to occur.

Despite the crowds which throng the freeways, there have been few reports of people leaving the City of Angels because of the smog. There have been some who moved to Torrance to avoid smog. For the most part, Angelenos sit and gag and cuss.

People who are most likely to get cancer are those who have allergies. If they smoke to boot, there may be trouble ahead.

The Indians who built their teepees in this valley used to call it the "Valley of the Smokes" because the smoke from their campfires used to hang, smog-like, in the air.

It might also be called the "Valley of the Smokes and Smokers" today. In the light of the doctors' reports, it

As best we could check in round numbers, the federal government in just the past 10 years took from the American people the fantastic sum of \$459 Billion dollars in taxes. This is 30 times more than the annual average of all previous 150 years. The federal budget for the 1957 fiscal year is \$71.8 billion dollars, the largest in any peace-time year in U.S. history. To raise this money the government takes 21 per cent to 91 per cent of all personal incomes, plus more than 50 per cent of all profits earned by American business.

Only 1.6 per cent of federal taxes can be collected from incomes at rates above 85 per cent. Only 6 per cent can be collected from incomes at rate about 75 per cent. Only 13 per cent can be collected from incomes above 20 per cent. More than 80 per cent... we repeat, more than 80 per cent of the taxes collected are derived from those who pay the minimum tax of 20 per cent. In 1925, taxpayers with an income of \$5000 a year paid only \$13 in taxes... today the same taxpayer pays almost \$1000 on the same \$5000 income. This does not include all the rest of the taxes he is called upon to pay and which are hidden in the goods and services he requires.

(Second part in next issue of "After Hours.")

might be called the "Valley of the Cancerous Smokes and Smokers."

Members of the Southern California Chamber of Commerce may begin slashing their wrists at these reports, but such seem to be the case.

There may not be a cough in a carload of smokes, but there's certainly plenty of coughs in a valley full of smog. Apparently there's a carload of cancer with both.

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